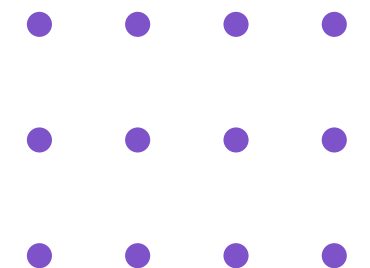# BlastPoint Best Practices

Modern Utility CX

A collection of best practices and **key insights on running a modern utility CX organization** from industry leaders nationwide.
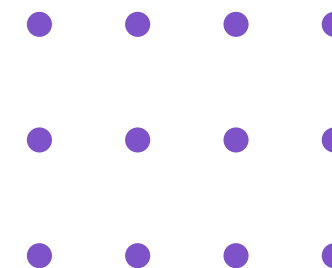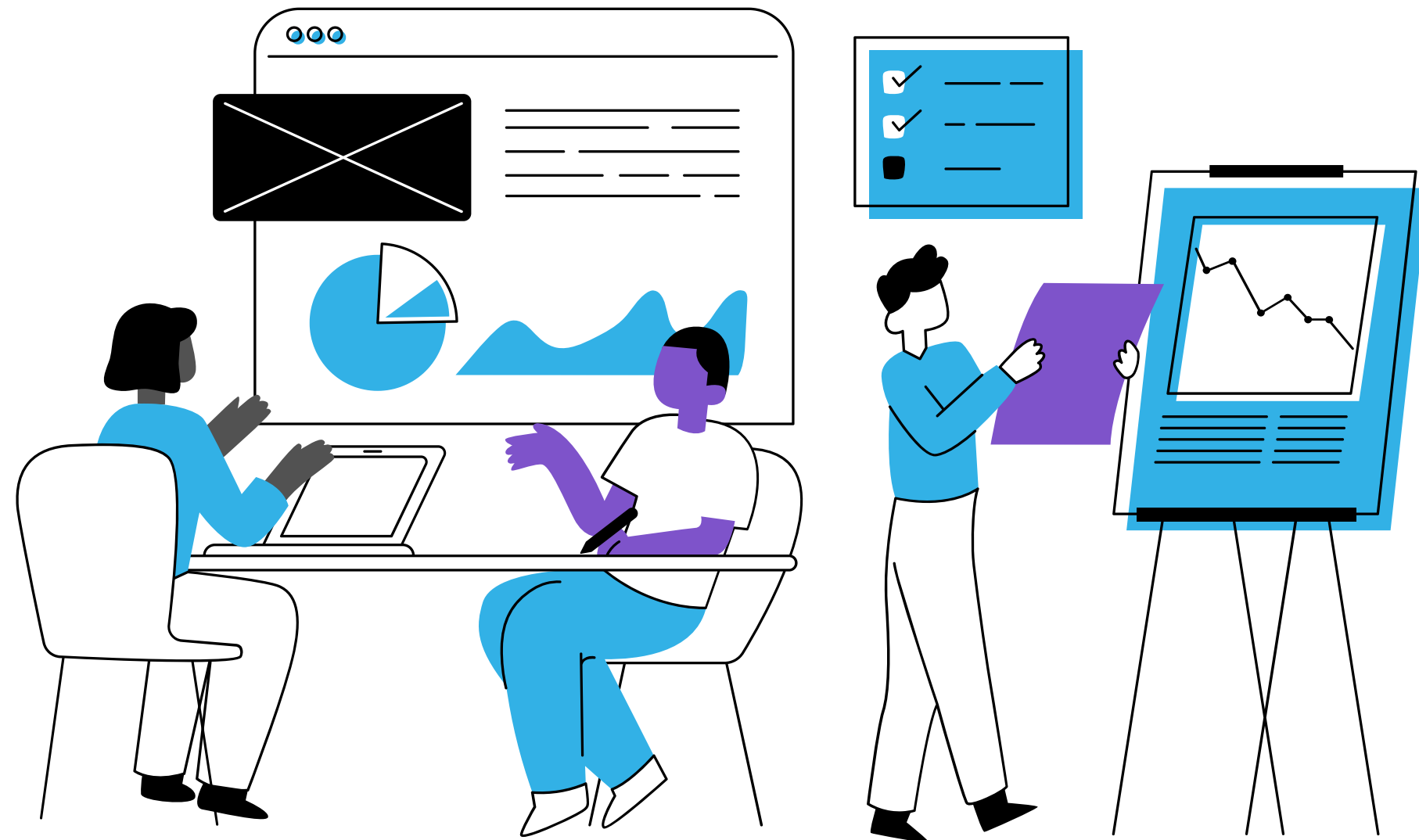
About this Best Practices Guide

We're putting together a **comprehensive guide** of best practices for setting up and **running a modern utility CX org** by engaging CX leaders from across the industry.

This collection is based on our experience **working with dozens of the world's most forward utility brands,** large and small.

CX Metrics & KPIs

Your customer organization's North Star: from CSAT and NPS, Ease-of-Service, Program Engagement, Load and Payments, and more… You can't improve what you don't measure.

Cross-Org Customer Alignment

Every department at your utility affects CX. This is often a paradigm shift for most utilities. You want drive towards cross-org alignment around the customer, and towards a data-driven, customer-centric decision-making culture.
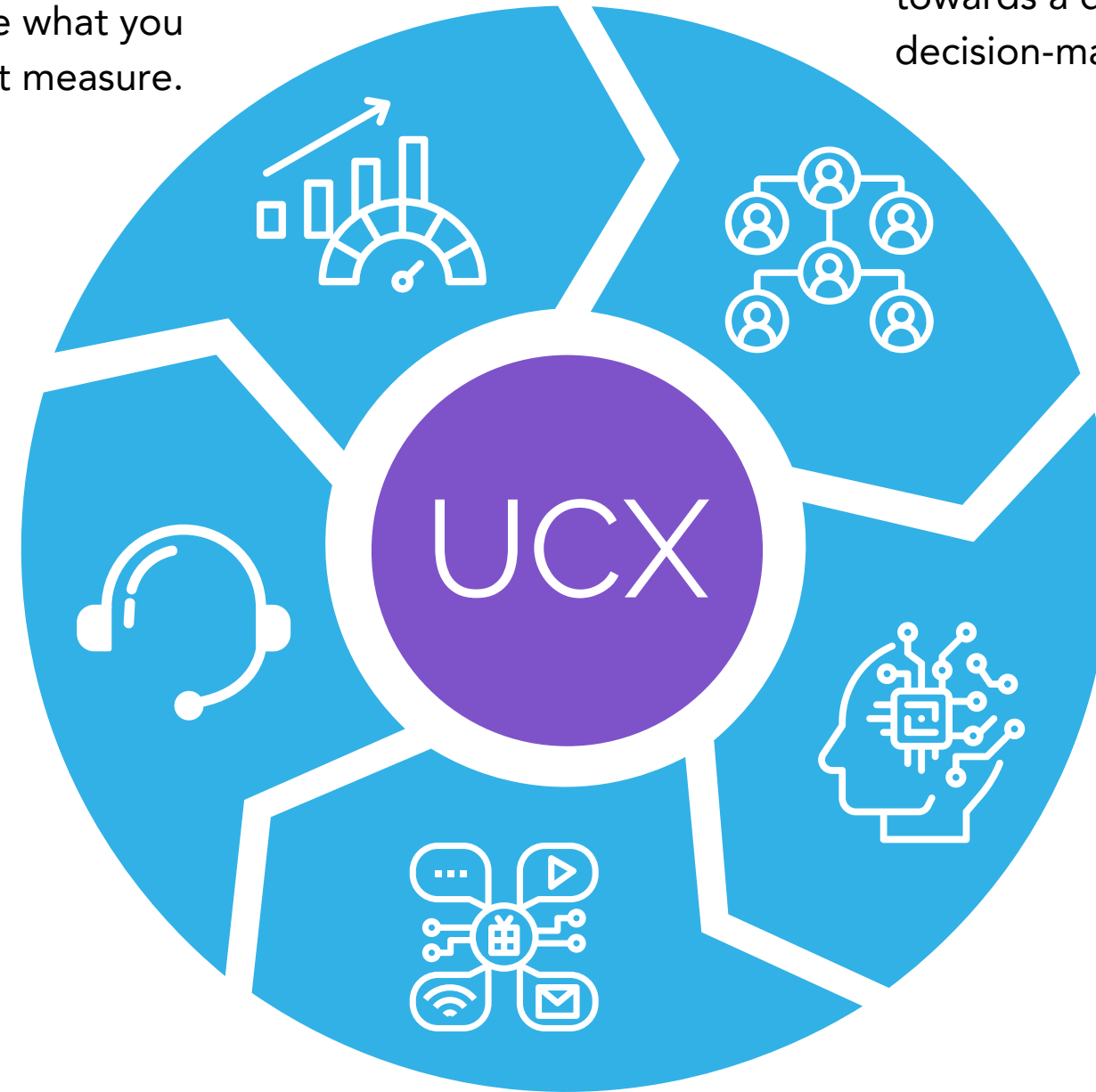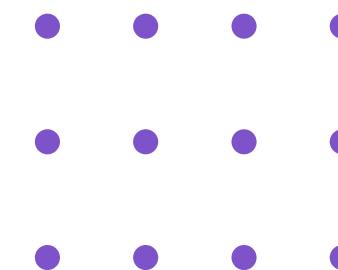
Customer Operations

What are your strategic and tactical customer priorities? Improve call center operations? Unlock new revenue streams? Optimize field operations? Manage billing and collections? How SMART are your objectives?

UCX

Customer Data & Insights

Understand, predict, and drive customer behavior. From investing in the right parts of your customer journey to creating personalized experiences that proactively address customer needs: you need data, tools, and partners to unlock its value.

Customer Engagement

Drive customer engagement by engaging with the right customers, through the right channels, at the right times, with the right messaging. Self-serve touch points, programs and services, marketing, and community engagement are all part of this.

Utility CX Maturity Assessment

Area	Beginner	Medium	Advanced
CX Metrics & KPIs	We measure basic metrics like call duration and number of complaints.	We utilize CSAT and NPS to gauge customer satisfaction.	We have a variety of AI-assisted KPIs, including ease of service and customer effort score, to paint a full picture of CSAT.
Cross-Org Alignment	Our organization operates in silos. Each department has its own customer metrics.	There's some cross-departmental coordination around customer experience.	We have a holistic, organization-wide focus on customer-centricity, with CX integrated with EX.
Data & Insights	We collect basic customer data and occasionally analyze it.	We regularly analyze customer internal and external data, using it to inform business decisions.	We use advanced analytics and AI to predict and influence customer behavior.
Customer Ops	Our customer operations are functional, but we don't actively seek to optimize them.	We have some initiatives in place to improve key operational areas.	Our operations are continuously optimized based on customer feedback and data insights.
Engagement	We send out generic comms to our entire customer base through limited channels.	We segment our customer base and send targeted comms. We iterate based on data-driven insights.	We use advanced tools for personalizing customer interactions and engagement at scale.
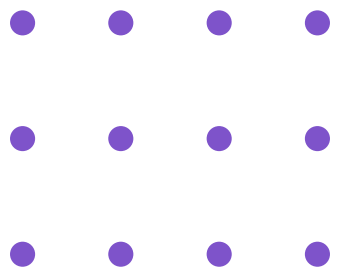
UCX Metrics & KPIs
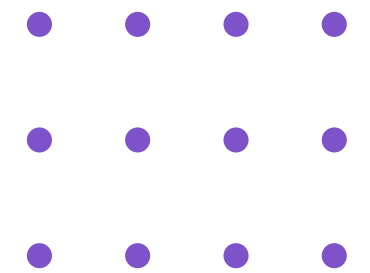
UCX Metrics & KPIs

You can't change what you don't measure. KPIs are the heartbeat of your CX organization, guiding you to success and letting you know when and where adjustments are needed.

Implementing KPIs that are **SMART** may seem like common sense, but it can be **complicated** in practice.

Specific: Set precise targets for what you want to achieve, such as a '5% increase in CSAT' or a '15% increase in program enrollment'.

Measurable: How are you measuring your primary CX KPIs? Advanced utilities are now using AI to measure and predict CSAT and NPS at the household level in real-time. This allows them to measure satisfaction granularly, and target customers based on satisfaction levels and reasons for dissatisfaction for proactive, automated, and personalized intervention.

Achievable: How do you know your customer program enrollment goals are achievable? Is a goal of '5% enrollment increase for Autopay' a reasonable goal? Is a program close to saturation, or does it still have a lot of low hanging fruit? Advanced utilities are using AI to create program saturation models to set goals that are achievable in the context of their customer base.

Relevant: With metrics like CSAT going down across the industry due to macroeconomic conditions, are they still the most relevant way to measure the health of your customer organization? Some utilities are revising their primary KPIs in 2023, adding other metrics like Customer Effort Scores (CES) and other ease-of-business or operational KPIs.

Time-Bound: Goals without deadlines are just dreams. By measuring your KPIs more granularly, you can create more a more agile customer organization that allows for experimentation and iterative improvements.
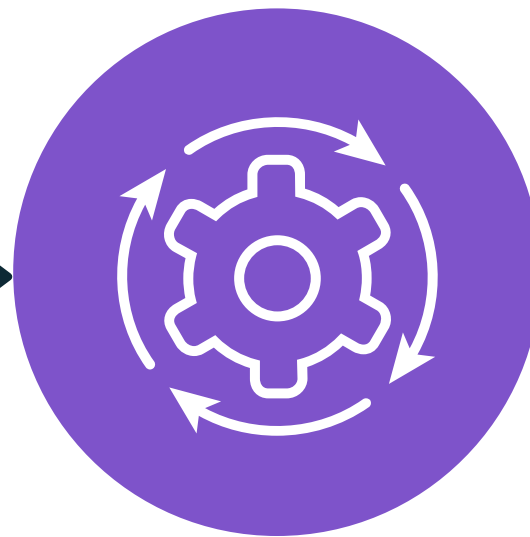
Typical Utility CX KPIs

Gain insights into the comprehensive set of KPIs that high-performing utilities use to measure and enhance their customer experience.
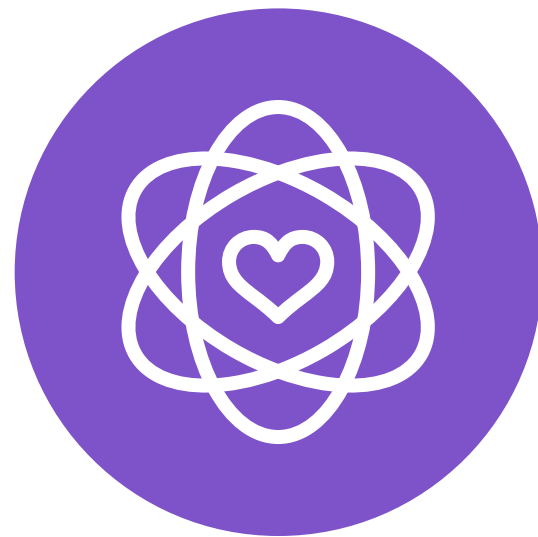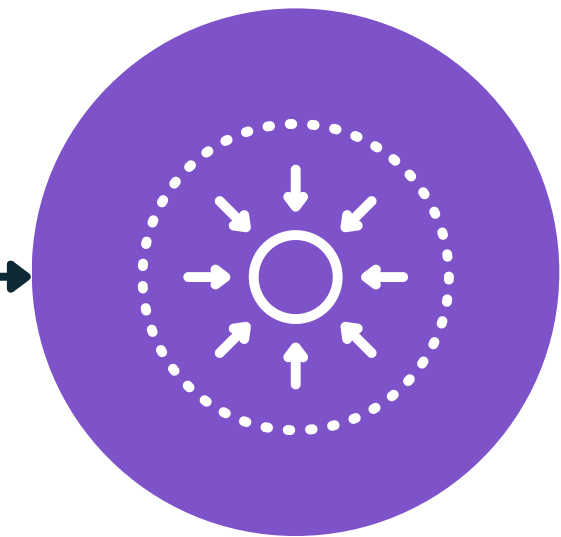
PERCEPTION

- Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)
- Net Promoter Score (NPS)
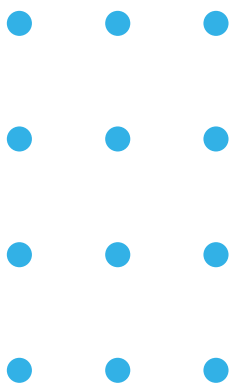- Customer Effort Score (CES)

DESCRIPTIVE

- First Call Resolution
- Average Handle Time
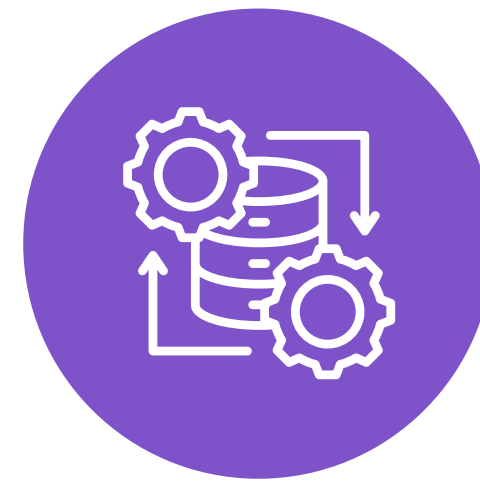- Service Outage Duration
- ETR Accuracy

BEHAVIORAL

- Program Enrollment Goals
- Marketing Engagement Metrics
- Collection Rate Goals

AI-Driven CX KPIs

Advanced utilities are **using AI to track KPIs more granularly,** and understand how certain changes to their customer experience may affect their KPIs ("what-if simulation").

Operational Data
- **Program Enrollment**
- Billing & Payments
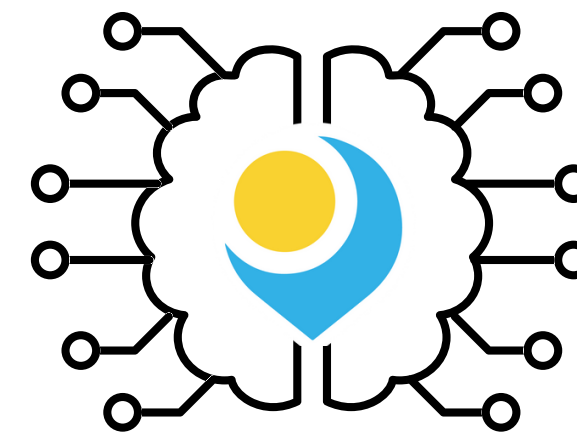- Usage Data
- Service Interruptions
- Engagement Touchpoints

External Data
- **Open Data**
- Third Party Data
- Utility-specific Models

Survey Data
- **CSAT**
- OSAT
- TSAT
- NPS
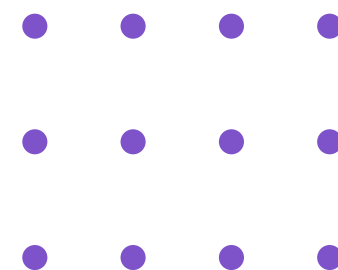
1 Real-Time CSAT/NPS

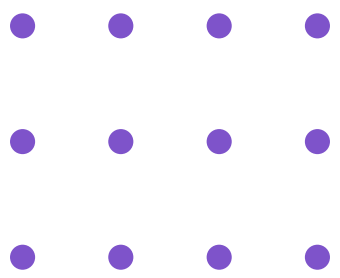**2** Rooftop-Level CSAT/NPS
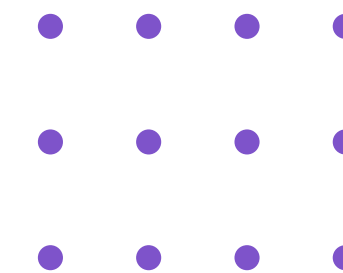
3 CSAT-Based Targeting
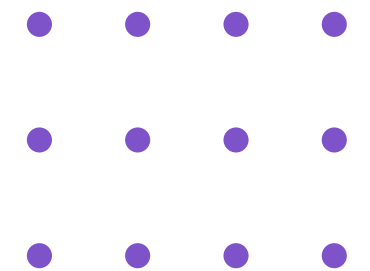
4 CSAT Drivers & What-If Simulation
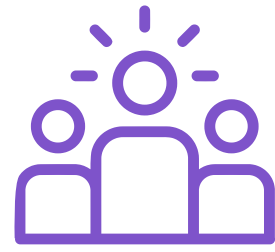
Cross-Org Customer Alignment

# Cross-Organizational Customer Alignment Matters

Every department at your utility has a hand in customer experience. Your customer journey touches - directly or indirectly - every team and employee.

UCX Should Come From The Top

Your C-Suite should have a customer centered position. Explicit directive and alignment from leadership on the importance of CX-centric culture.
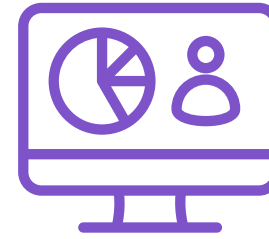
You Should Be Using Customer Data To Align

By providing easy access to centralized, data-driven customer insights, you will empower every team at your utility to align on the customer in parallel.

Regular Active Cross-Org Alignment is Must

Some utilities are facilitating monthly Customer Council Meetings, each department owning a key CX driver. How are you actively aligning?

UCX Should Have Shared Ownership
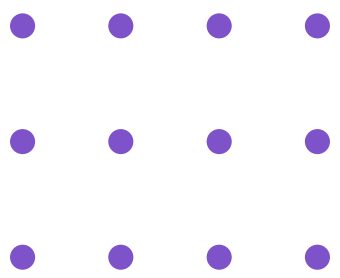
Every department should be responsible for its own customer metrics. Advanced utilities have implemented shared cross-org KPIs on everyone's shared scorecard.

You Should Include EX In Your UCX Strategy

Advanced utilities include Employee Experience metrics as part of the CX strategy. Some utilities include Community Engagement in this as well.

Customer Data & Insights
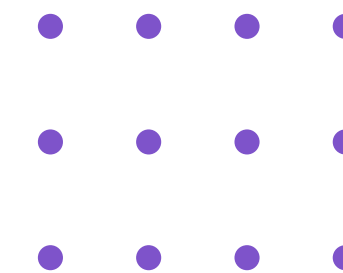
Customer Data & AI Foundations

The following are the key components of any customer analytics practice at a modern utility, in order of execution.

01
Harness Internal Data

02
Integrate External Data

03
Establish Clear Objectives

04
Use ML/AI to Generate Insights

05
Activate Your Insights for Impact

Harness Your Internal Customer Data

Utilities sit on mountains of powerful customer data. But to use it, it must be consolidated, cleaned, and structured for easy access and analysis.

What Customer Data?

Which data should you focus on wrangling first? This should be informed by a business objective you are solving. However, most customer data falls into these categories:

- Account Information: Name, Address, Customer Type, Account ID, etc...
- Call Center Data: from structured data like number of customer calls and call resolution, to unstructured data like call transcriptions.
- Billing, Payments, and Collections: from payment method breakdown, to current overdue balance, to number of late payments, to collection events.
- Program Engagement: which programs and services are your customers dialed into? From autopay to e-billing to EV rebates to Energy Efficiency, and more...
- Usage Data: whether it's 15-minute interval AMI data or aggregated average usage.
- Digital & Marketing Engagement: from email open rates to the number of logins to your portal.
- Qualitative Data: from general customer surveys, post-transaction surveys, focus groups, and research.

How Do I Wrangle All This Data?

You have so much data in so many different systems. How do you package all of it into a useful format? Here are some steps to consider:

- Data Discovery: First, you have to identify the sources and types of data that exist across your organization.
- Data Quality Management: Next, make sure your data is clean, consistent, and reliable. You'll need to address cleaning up inconsistencies (e.g. "123 Main St" and "123 Main Street"), as well as dealing with missing or incomplete data.
- Data Warehousing: Centralize your data in a single repository. This could be a traditional data warehouse, or another method of centralizing data.
- Data Governance: Establish clear policies and rules for data access and usage. You'll want to create roles and responsibilities for data management and set standards for data quality.
- Data Security & Privacy: Put in place measures to protect sensitive data and ensure compliance with privacy laws. Encrypt, anonymize, or pseudonymize data where necessary.

Integrate External Data

Utilities have lots of powerful customer data, but it sheds light on a very narrow sliver of your customers' lives. Complement your internal data with external data to understand them holistically and serve them better.

Open Public Data: from the Census, to the American Community Survey, Department of Energy, and many others... There's lots of great, free data sources. But unless you have a team dedicated to maintaining it or go through a vendor, it can be challenging to integrate that data into your day-to-day operations.
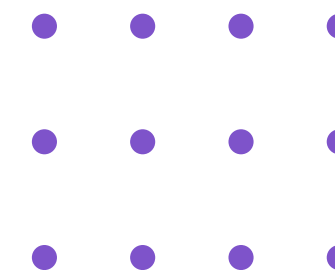
3rd Party Data: third party data through a vendor (like BlastPoint) can help shed light on individual households and businesses. From demographics, to psychographics, to channel preferences, to housing, to consumer behaviors, to energy values, and more... Keep in mind that third-party data like this is never 100% accurate, but can have incredible predictive power at scale.

Utility Specific Models: more and more utilities are leveraging utility-specific AI models. These models provide not just data, but predictive insights about specific utility use cases, like who is going to buy an Electric Vehicle next, who is most likely to struggle paying their utility bills, or participate in Energy Efficiency programs.

Establish Clear Objectives

Data for the sake of data isn't actionable. Start with your business objective, and work your way backwards.
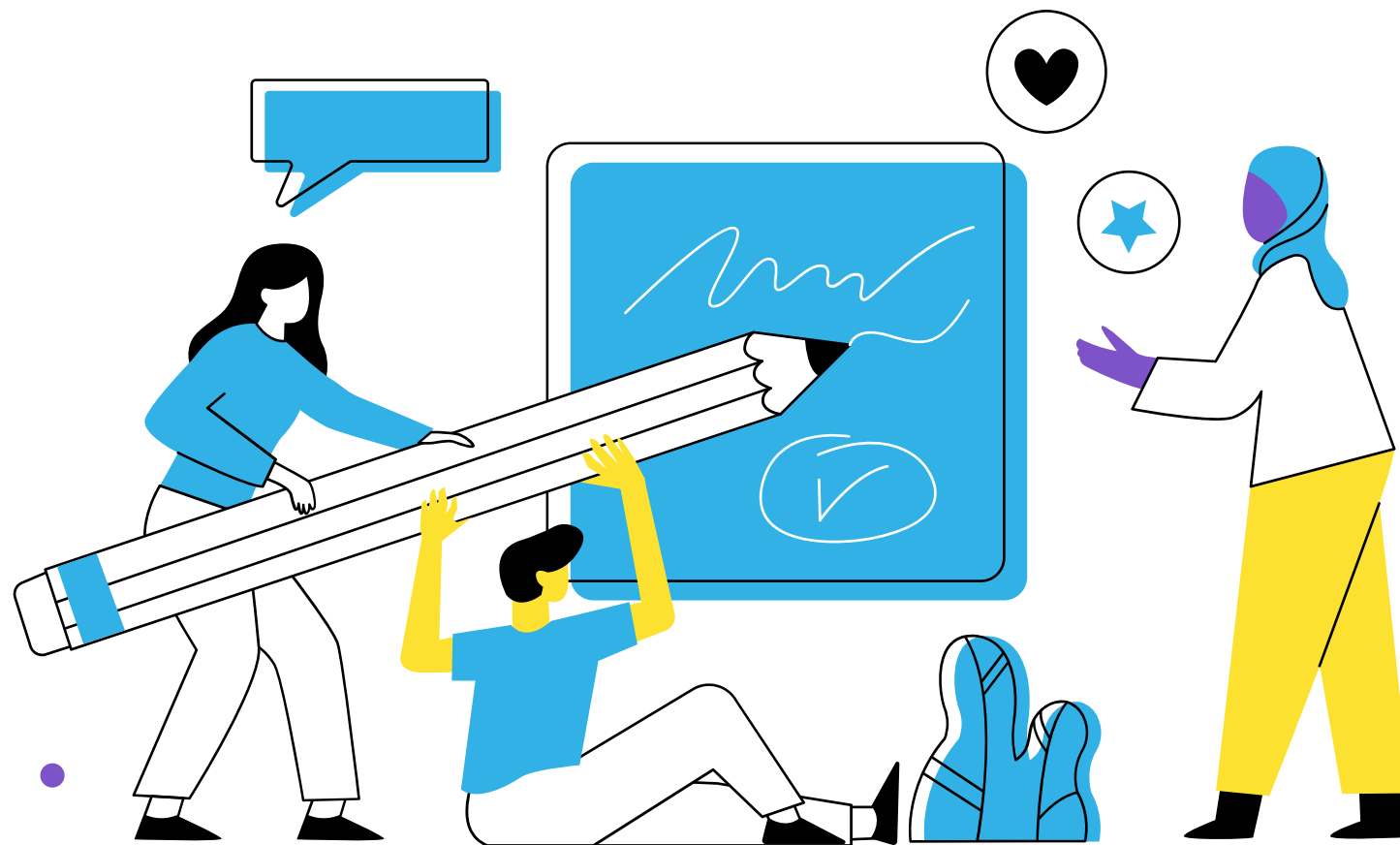
The Importance of Objective-Driven Data Science

Every data problem should start with an objective to achieve, a question to answer, or a hypothesis to validate.

Save Time & Money

Having a clear roadmap of near and long-term business objectives will allow you to tackle internal data wrangling and external data harnessing more effectively by focusing only on the data that is relevant to achieving your objective.

Iterative Data Maturity

By having a business-first approach to data, achieving data maturity can be a gradual, iterative process. This allows you to derive value from your data more quickly and affordably. When you apply data to new use cases, you can stand on the shoulders of the data-work that was done previously.

Segmentation

There are 3 types of segmentation: off-the-shelf, foundational, and objective-driven. There are many ways to slice and dice a customer base into segments, and not every segmentation is actionable for each use case:

- Off-the-shelf Segmentation (e.g. Mosaic Segments) bucket the entire population into 60 – 70 general buckets and relies only on external data. This makes it hard to make actionable.
- Foundational Segmentation are your top 5 – 7 customer personas. These are good for aligning your organization around the customer.
- Objective-Driven Segmentation uses AI to guarantee that the segments are optimized for impact around a particular objective.

Generate Insights From Your Data

Once you've got your data cleaned up and have a clear objective in mind, it's time to generate actionable insights.

1 Simple Data Analysis

Sometimes, all you need is a quick analysis of data. For example, identifying income-eligible customers, for example, can take mere minutes with the right data and AI tools, even for business teams.

2 Propensity Modeling

Propensity modeling is a type of machine learning model that helps you identify a customer's propensity to do a certain thing or behave in a certain way. Propensity models can tell you who are the customers most likely to adopt EVs next, or who you should target for your E-Billing campaign to maximize your ROI. Next Best Offers / Actions operate on a series of propensity models.

3 Segmentation

If propensity modeling can help you target the right customers, then segmentation can help you engage with different types of customers in ways that are personalized to them. Is this a customer who is likely to purchase an EV because of the environmental benefits? Or, is this someone who is likely to do so for the long-term cost savings on fuel?

4 What-If Simulations

With the right tools, you can get quick answers to complicated questions like: "What would happen to customer satisfaction if rates went up by $5?" or "How would increasing adoption of LIHEAP impact average customer arrears?"

5 Other Methods

There are many other methods to generate insights: from disaggregation for insights on energy usage to natural language processing for insights on call center customer experiences.

Activate Your Insights For Customer Impact

Activating your insights is the most important and most underrated part of the business perspective on Data & AI.

You can have perfect data, amazing insights, but unless you activate it to create impact, it's all for nothing.

Integrate with Your Business Process First

Tech integrations take time. Don't wait – integrate data with your business processes by using customer orchestration and BI tools.

Integrate With Your Tech Stack Next

Integrating the right insights with the right systems (marketing automation, call center software) allows you to automate and scale data-driven decisions.

Provide Safe, Easy Access to Insights

By using a Customer Data & AI Platform, you can empower every business team at your utility with safe, easy access to actionable data and insights.

Adopt Data Literacy as a Core Value

Empower every employee to understand and use data. This cultivates a data-driven culture, leading to improved decision-making across your organization.
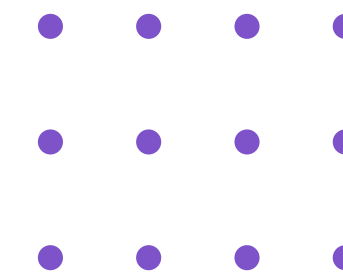
Look to Leading Utilities for Examples

Look at how other utilities are leveraging data and insights to impact their customer metrics. Check out these case studies for a start.
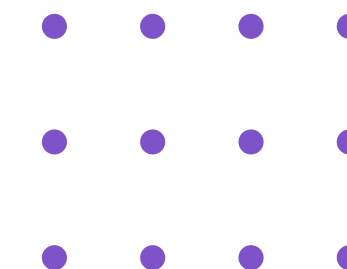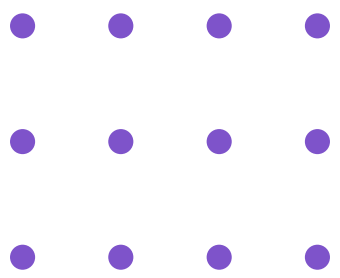
Customer Operations

Rank Your Top Customer Priorities

- Driving Financial Assistance Programs
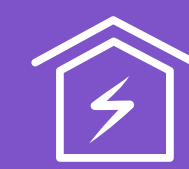- Grow Utility Revenue Streams
- Enhance Customer Analytics
- Optimize Call Center Operations
- Increase Adoption of Billing Programs
- Driving Adoption of Energy Efficiency
- Increase Adoption of Digital Channels
- Advance Adoption of Green Technology
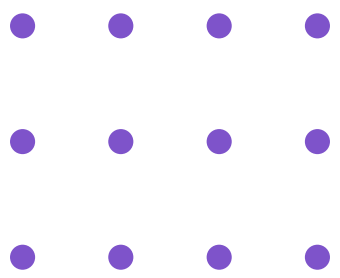- Other Customer Priorities
- Find New Commercial Partners
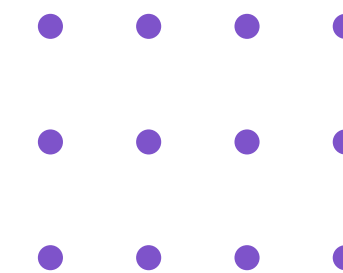- Increase Customer Satisfaction / NPS
- SUBMIT YOUR RANKING FOR BENCHMARKS

Customer Engagement

Targeted, Personalized Communication

Advanced utilities go beyond "one-size-fits-all" and use customer data to personalize customer engagement and communication.
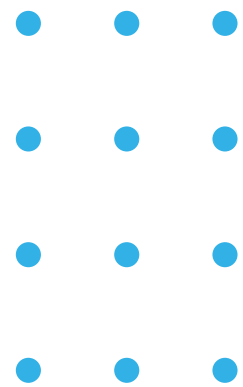
Customer Targeting

Preferred Channels

Personalized Messaging

What Channels Do You Engage?

Different customers segments consume information through different channels. Do you go beyond email and direct mail communications?

Outbound

Email
Direct Mail
Social Media (Paid & Organic)
Television
Radio
Phone & Text

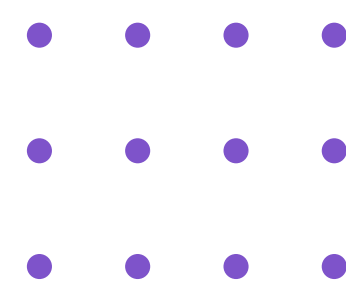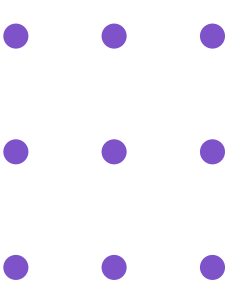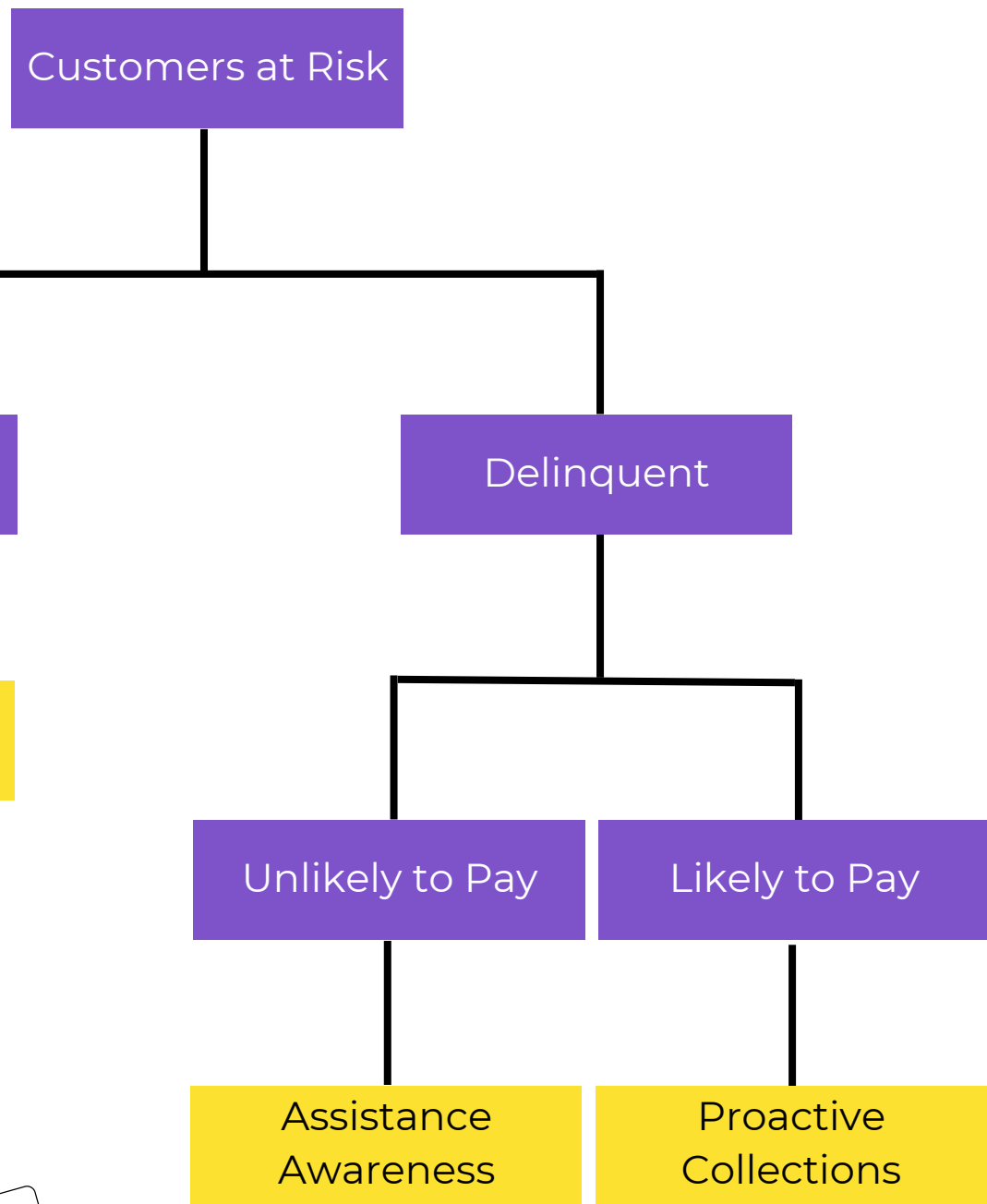## Self-Serve

Web Portal
Digital Assistant / ChatBot
Smart IVR
Mobile Application

Hypercare & Feedback Collection

Call Center
Community Engagement
Account Managers
Customer Panels & Focus Groups
Customer Surveys (General & Post Transaction)

Customers at Risk

Not Delinquent — Assistance Awareness

Delinquent

Unlikely to Pay — Assistance Awareness

Likely to Pay — Proactive Collections

Automated, Proactive Communication

Use customer data, predictive analytics, and automation tools to create personalized evergreen campaigns that scale and address customer needs proactively and automatically.
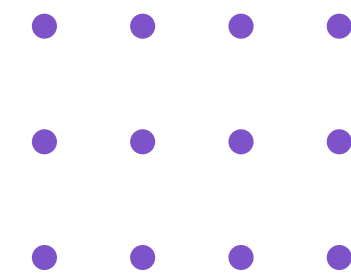
BlastPoint

Start your Advanced Data Analytics journey today.

✉ Info@BlastPoint.com

🌐 www.BlastPoint.com